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Professor Debapratim Das (left) with a research student



IIT-GUWAHATI DEVELOPS INJECTABLE HYDROGEL FOR CANCER TREATMENT

Researchers developed an advanced injectable hydrogel for localised cancer treatment with fewer side effects than conventional treatments

TARGETED DRUG RELEASE CAN CUT SIDE EFFECTS

Hydrogel is a water-based, three-dimensional polymer network that can absorb and retain fluids. It can act as a stable reservoir for anti-cancer drugs. It responds to high glutathione (GSH) levels, a molecule found in cancer cells. Upon encountering high GSH levels, it releases the drug in a targeted manner, not affecting nearby cells, leading to fewer side effects

TUMOUR SHRINKS 75% WITHIN 18 DAYS

■ "In preclinical trials, a single injection of the hydrogel, loaded with the chemotherapy drug Doxorubicin, resulted in a 75% reduction in tumour size within 18 days," professor Debapratim Das of IIT-G said
■ The research was conducted in collaboration with Bose Institute, Kolkata. It has been published in the journal Materials Horizons

8,00,000

NEW CANCER CASES IN INDIA EACH YEAR, ACCORDING TO GOVT ESTIMATES

Head coach Gambhir's ambiguous reply gives new twist to Rohit not figuring in the playing XI for Sydney Test saga

RESTED?

GOMESH S @ Sydney

WITH less than 24 hours to go for the Sydney Test, the India team did not know who would come out for toss. Or so it seems.

"The answer remains the same." That was what India team head coach Gautam Gambhir had to say when he was asked whether Rohit Sharma will be in the playing XI for the fifth and final Test between India and Australia that begins on Friday. "We are going to take a look at the wicket and probably announce our playing XI tomorrow," Gambhir said moments earlier. Probably for any other player this would have been an apt answer but for a captain who has been appointed for a series this seemed little ambiguous. Whether resting was the decision of the team management or Rohit's was also not clear.

India begin their last match of the tour amid speculation of dressing room drama and Gambhir's stern warning to players over not performing well. Even before a ball was bowled there seemed to be intrigue over Sharma's position in the team. There were multiple indications, including his time in the nets, that suggest he is all set to be replaced. In fact, there are indications that he has told the team about his decision to opt out. This could be one of those rare instances when a captain has been dropped on poor form and for India this could be one of the first instances when a captain has been dropped or opted out.

Gambhir made it clear during the briefing that performance alone matters. "Indian cricket's transition is in safe hands as long as there are honest people in the dressing room. Only criteria to be in that dressing room is performance," he said.

In that case, Shubman Gill



WHAT NEXT FOR ROHIT?

Rohit Sharma's future, with England visiting India for a white-ball series (five T20Is and three ODIs) in January before the Champions Trophy, depends on him and what he decides. His ODI numbers have been exceptional and he could lead the team against England after a possible meeting with selectors.

BUMRAH LIKELY TO CAPTAIN INDIA

Jasprit Bumrah, the vice captain, has been the team's top performer with 30 wickets in four outings at an astonishing 12.83 average, is expected to take over if Rohit sits out. Under Bumrah's captaincy that India won the first Test in Perth.

is set to walk in at No 3 and in-form Jasprit Bumrah will lead in the absence of Sharma, who has been out of form, scoring only 31 runs at an average of 6.2 from five innings so far. He lost two Tests after joining the team in Australia. With the home series loss against New Zealand, pressure was mounting on the Indian captain.

If nets were any indication, Sharma, who was not much involved for the better part while India were training. He could be seen chat-

ting with Washington Sundar, Bumrah, Gill before batting briefly along with the backup batters towards the end. It was not until most of the drill was over that Sharma and Gambhir were seen together alongside Bumrah.

If Sharma gets dropped, which is most likely as of Thursday evening, MCG Test could be his last as a Test player. For India, a win in Sydney would help retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and keep World Test Championship hopes alive.

15% bus fare hike in K'taka from Jan 5

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FROM January 5, fares of state-owned KSRTC, BMT, NERTC and NWRTC buses will be increased by 15%. The state cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to revise fares of ordinary and air-conditioned buses run by the four RTCs.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters that the cabinet has given administrative approval for revision of bus fares.

Patil said the RTCs spent Rs 13.21 crore a day on fuel. Ten years ago, diesel price was Rs 60.98 per litre and the RTCs spent Rs 9.16 crore a day on it. The expenditure on employees, which was Rs 12.85 crore, has increased to Rs 18.36 crore. The financial burden on the RTCs has increased and hence, fares



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah arrives at Vidhana Soudha to attend the cabinet meeting on Thursday | NAGARAJ GADGAL

have been revised.

The proposal was for a fare hike by 13 to 15%. "We decided to hike it by 15%. Fares in buses run by RTCs in Karnataka are lesser than those in Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh," he said.

He, however, said that the state government will not stop its ambitious Shakti free ride guarantee for women. With the fare re-

vision, the RTCs are expected to generate an additional revenue of Rs 74.85 crore a month.

"We have earmarked Rs 5015 crore for Shakti scheme in our budget, and Rs 417 crore is released to the four RTCs every month. This has not affected the state's finances. Karnataka is one of the best states in managing finances," he said.

Patil said the cabinet also ap-

BJP slams govt

BJP has criticised the state government for increasing bus fares by 15%. State unit president BY Vijayendra said the government has launched five guarantees, but it is unable to mobilise funds for them. The transport corporations have gone bankrupt because of the Shakti guarantee.

proved a proposal to obtain loans amounting to Rs 2,000 crore by the RTCs towards payment of provident fund dues and the expenditure on fuel till November 2024. Asked if the RTCs will get loans from financial institutions, he said they will get based on their income-generating capacity.

Work not over yet, Waqf JPC could miss Budget session deadline as well

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Waqf Amendment Bill may miss the next deadline of the Budget session of Parliament, scheduled to begin on January 30, according to sources.

The committee headed by BJP MP Jagadambika Pal is scheduled to present its report on the last day of the Budget session after missing the first deadline of the just concluded winter session of Parliament. The Budget session is expected to conclude on February 12.

The Centre may now push the report for the Monsoon session as the committee will not be able

to complete its work by the stipulated deadline, said people aware of the developments.

Another key reason, according to sources, is the strong opposition from NDA allies Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United) over the proposed legislation. Several Muslim groups in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have been opposing most of the amendments, including the appointment of non-Muslims as members of the Central Waqf Council and state Waqf Boards.

"The government has not given any assurance to TDP or JD(U) on bringing any changes in the contentious proposals. The JD(U) does not want to risk its electoral prospects in view

of the impending assembly elections in Bihar," said a party leader, adding that the TDP and JD(U) enjoy a strong support base of minorities in their states. Though the government had listed the Waqf bill for passage during the winter session, the panel sought an extension after a showdown with the Opposition.

Speaking to this paper, a panel member said it is impossible for the committee to meet the deadline as it will take a long time to record the concerns of lakhs of witnesses. "The chairman is under pressure from the Opposition to hear out stakeholders who have real concerns. The committee has not followed due process till now," said an Opposition member.



MUIZZU MINISTER-EAM MEET TODAY

India and the Maldives are set to strengthen their ties as New Delhi hosts the Foreign Minister of the island country, Abdulla Khaleel. He will meet EAM S Jaishankar on Friday | P9

WITH THIS ISSUE
CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE
40 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLET)

1,228 graft cases pending before Lokayukta

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AS MANY as 1,228 cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act against elected representatives and government officials are pending before the Karnataka Lokayukta.

Corruption cases against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, former CMs BS Yediyurappa and HD Kumaraswamy, and minister Zameer Ahmed Khan are among them.

Some cases have been pending for more than 10 years. Of the 1,228 cases, only 337 have been sent for sanction for prosecution. But the authorities have given sanction only for prosecution in 142 cases. During the recent winter session in Belagavi, Siddaramaiah, in his reply in the Council to BJP's DS Arun, stated that many cases needed legal opinion, some of the accused had obtained stay orders, and a few needed opinion from heads of various departments to proceed further.

Corruption cases have also been registered against many MLAs, including BY Vijayendra, ST Somashekar and Gali Janardhan Reddy, and many former legislators, including Madal Virupaksha and Chowdareddy.

Woman kills husband for bid to rape daughter, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

POLICE have arrested a woman for allegedly murdering her husband who attempted to rape their daughter at Umarani near Chikkodi on Wednesday night.

After murdering him, she chopped his body into pieces and buried them in a field, according to sources. The deceased has been identified as Srimant Itnal and his wife as Savithri.

When Savithri refused to cooperate with him, Itnal attempted to rape their daughter. Enraged by this, Savithri smashed his head with a stone and murdered him. She later chopped his body into pieces, put them into a barrel, rolled it to the field nearby and buried them, the sources said.

After returning home, Savit-



ri packed the knife and the machete she used to chop Itnal's body, his blood-stained clothes and a mattress in a gunny bag, tied a stone to it and dumped it into a well.

She also dumped the barrel into the well with which she smashed her husband's head and kept it in a shed. Savithri warned her elder daughter, who woke up when she was cleaning the house, not to disclose anything about the murder. When local police recovered Itnal's body parts in the field, she confessed to the crime, the sources said.

TOP HONOUR

Manu, Gukesh among 4 Khel Ratna awardees

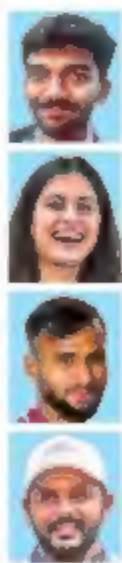
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AS 2024 was an Olympic year, there were exceptions to the number of Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna 2024 awardees and also the Arjuna Awards list. Expectedly, the list—released by the sports ministry on Thursday—is dominated by Olympic and Paralympic winners. D Gukesh, who became the youngest world chess champion in December, too is in the list.

Speculation over Manu Bhaker not being considered for Khel Ratna turned out to be false. India men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh, who won bronze in 2024 Olympics—his second medal after Tokyo 2020—too featured among the four chosen for the country's highest sports awards. Para athlete high jumper Praveen Kumar is the fourth name.

There were reports that Manu was not on the list but the sports ministry's official announcement included her name. Interestingly, Manu had not applied. It is not clear whether Gukesh's name was added after his spectacular win on December 12.

It is learnt that the awards committee met a couple of days after the chess final. It is understood that the panel had taken cognisance of applications but the final list was made after the sports ministry included two more names as per the latest rules.



'Return of Maharashtra farm land soon'

Mumbai: Maharashtra cabinet on Thursday decided to amend the land revenue code and return 4,949 acres of defaulted agriculture land to original farmers from whom these parcels were seized due to non-payment of government dues and taxes | P10

MP town protests over Union Carbide waste

Bhopal: Protests erupted at Pithampur in Dhar district on Thursday, hours after truckloads of toxic waste was brought from the defunct Union Carbide factory. Waste from the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy site is to be disposed at TDSF at Tarapur | P10

Veteran journalist S Jayachandran passes away in Bengaluru

T'Puram: Veteran editor, author, critic and screenplay writer S Jayachandran Nair (85), who revolutionised magazine journalism in Malayalam, passed away in Bengaluru on Thursday. He served as editor of Samakalika Malayalam Weekly, a sister publication of TNIE | P7

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